

SLURFUND

Fact Sheet

COMMENCEMENT BAY NEARSHORE/TIDEFLATS

Tacoma, Washington



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

August 2001

(Middle Waterway)
Tacoma, Washington

Get Involved! Send EPA your comments on the proposed cleanup for Middle Waterway. You have until September 24th to tell us what you think of the plans.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would like your comments on the proposed cleanup plans for Middle Waterway. Most of the contamination is located at the mouth of the waterway and in the subsurface sediments at the head of the waterway. Because of this, the waterway has been divided into three different areas, Area A (mouth), Area B (middle), and Area C (head). Within these three main areas, there are 67 smaller areas that would require different remedies to reach the cleanup goals set for Middle Waterway. The remedies being proposed are dredging, capping, enhanced natural recovery (thin-layer capping), natural recovery, and no action. Monitoring is also required for all the proposed remedies, except no action.

Area A - The majority of contamination at the mouth of the waterway would be dredged and/or capped. Some dredging would also be needed in areas adjacent to the dredged areas to provide an even grade in the landscape. In general, dredging would go deep enough to expose clean sediments, in some cases down to ten feet. Where there are obstacles, such as the marine railway structures, sediments would be dredged to the extent possible (three feet) and then capped. Other remedies being proposed in Area A are enhanced natural recovery, natural recovery and no action.

Area B - West bank to be dredged, work on east side to be included in habitat project. Dredging would take place on the western bank of the waterway until all contamination is removed, and the bank will be reshaped. The cleanup on the east side of the waterway would be completed as part of the habitat mitigation project that is required for the St. Paul Waterway nearshore disposal facility. No action is being proposed for the remaining sediments in this area.

Send your written comments before September 24th to:

Nancy Harney, EPA Project Manager
1200 Sixth Avenue, ECL-111
Seattle, WA 98101

More detailed information about this cleanup can be found in a document called the DRAFT Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) for Middle Waterway. Copies of the document are available for review at the information repositories.

Area C - To be addressed primarily through enhanced natural recovery. At the head of the waterway, subsurface sediments in one small area are heavily contaminated. Dredging was evaluated as a cleanup option, however, the most contaminated sediments are enclosed under three feet of relatively clean sediments and there is no risk of exposure to human health or to the marine environment. Enhanced natural recovery is recommended for this area, as well as for another larger area to clean up surface contamination. These two areas are adjacent to areas where habitat restoration work has already been completed. Enhanced natural recovery, combined with leaving the subsurface contamination buried in place, will protect the marine environment in Middle

Waterway without destroying the work that has been accomplished so far. No action is proposed for the remaining areas in Area C.

The required dredging would remove about 92,700 cubic yards. Total cost for the proposed work would be about \$12.5 million.

Where Contaminated Sediments Will Be Disposed

Recently, the Middle Waterway Action Committee signed an agreement with the Port of Tacoma to use the Blair Slip 1 nearshore fill for disposal of contaminated sediments from Middle Waterway.

Background

The Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats (CB/NT) Superfund Site is located in Tacoma, Washington at the southern edge of Puget Sound. EPA placed the site on the National Priorities List for cleanup under Superfund on September 8, 1983. Since the late 1800's, shipbuilding, oil refining, chemical manufacturing and storage, and other industrial activities have caused hazardous waste contamination of the land and water in the Commencement Bay area. Many of these contaminants have affected marine life. The cleanup goal for the site is to have a healthy marine environment and protect people from eating contaminated seafood from the Bay. This goal was established in EPA's 1989 cleanup plan.

The CB/NT site includes the Hylebos, Sitcum, St. Paul, Middle, Wheeler-Osgood, and Thea Foss Waterways, the Puyallup River upstream to the Interstate-5 bridge, and adjacent land areas.

EPA has been working, for the past several years, to develop cleanup plans for the contaminated sediments in Commencement Bay. The community, other state and federal agencies, the Port of Tacoma, the City of Tacoma, and the business community have helped significantly with this effort.

In July 1997, EPA issued an Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) which modified the PCB cleanup level. In August 2000, EPA issued an ESD which described the cleanup plans for three of the other waterways in Commencement Bay – Thea Foss, Wheeler-Osgood, and Hylebos – and identified the disposal sites for all of Commencement Bay dredged contaminated sediments, which includes Middle Waterway. The three disposal sites are the St. Paul nearshore fill, Blair Slip 1, and an upland regional landfill.

Information Repositories

Tacoma Main Public Library *
1102 Tacoma Avenue South
Northwest Room
Tacoma, WA

Citizens for a Healthy Bay
917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 406
Tacoma, WA
(253) 383-2429 - *Please call for an appointment if information is needed after business hours.*

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency *
1200 Sixth Avenue
7th Floor Record Center
Seattle, WA

(*) Indicates official information repositories for the Administrative Record

For More Information

If you would like more information or a copy of the ESD for Middle Waterway, please call:
Nancy Harney, EPA Project Manager, at **206-553-6635**; email - harney.nancy@epa.gov
Jeanne O'Dell, Community Involvement Coordinator, at **206-553-6919**; email - odell.jeanne@epa.gov
or call our toll free number at **1-800-424-4372**.

Check Out EPA's Web Page

Internet information for the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats Superfund site can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>, then hit "index" near the bottom center of the page, hit "C" for Commencement Bay, hit "Nearshore/Tideflats."

Scroll down to Fact Sheets for the latest fact sheet, or scroll to Decision Documents to review the proposed Explanation of Significant Differences and other documents pertaining to the site.

Updated Information on the Olympic View Resource Area

The Olympic View Resource Area is located offshore of the peninsula between the Thea Foss and Middle Waterways. The area has been designated as a habitat restoration site. EPA proposed removing and/or capping sediments contaminated with dioxin in this area to protect public health and the environment. The public comment period closed June 4, 2001, and an Action Memorandum was signed on July 24th.

The design for the project has already begun and field work is expected to start in June 2002. All work is being performed by the City of Tacoma under an Administrative Order on Consent with EPA. A copy of the Memorandum is in the information repositories listed in this fact sheet. For more information on this project, please call **Karen Keeley**, EPA Project Manager, at **206-553-2141**.

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by calling one of the numbers listed above.



Region 10 (ECO-081)
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle WA 98101

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